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SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 19

48TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2007

INTRODUCED BY

Phil A. Griego

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE TO STUDY
TEACHER ATTENDANCE AND THE USE OF SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS IN
SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

WHEREAS, the legislative and the executive branches have
made a commitment to public school reform by, for example,
eliminating most social promotion; requiring more formalized
assistance for students who are failing; increasing grade-
level and graduation requirements; and instituting the three-
tier licensure system for teachers and school administrators
to raise teacher qualifications and salaries; and

WHEREAS, teachers and schools are now held accountable
for student achievement; and

WHEREAS, the state expects teachers to improve their
teaching skills through professional development; however,

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1 because most teacher contracts have not been extended beyond
2 the instructional year, professional development often causes
3 teacher absences from the classroom; and

4 WHEREAS, studies show that students who have teachers
5 with fewer absences have significantly larger improvements in
6 test scores and other achievement indicators; and

7 WHEREAS, the use of substitute teachers is disruptive to
8 students and, over time, can affect the academic structure of
9 a class, compromise the teacher's role as an educational
10 leader in the classroom and impede students' educational
11 development; and

12 WHEREAS, substitute teachers may have no knowledge of the
13 subject matter being taught in the classroom in which they are
14 substituting or may be unable to correctly follow or interpret
15 the lesson plans left by the absent teacher; and

16 WHEREAS, the pressures of the state's accountability
17 system and the requirements for adequate yearly progress make
18 untenable the use of substitutes who end up serving merely as
19 an adult presence in the classroom; and

20 WHEREAS, New Mexico's requirements for substitute teacher
21 certification are less than rigorous, but, even so, school
22 districts often find it difficult to attract and retain an
23 adequate pool of substitute teachers; and

24 WHEREAS, it is difficult to attract and retain
25 knowledgeable substitute teachers when pay is low and benefits

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1 are nonexistent; and

2 WHEREAS, the use of substitute teachers has budgetary
3 implications, and an unanticipated need for substitute
4 teachers can adversely affect a school district's budget;

5 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
6 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the legislative education study
7 committee be requested to study the issue of substitute
8 teachers, including qualifications, availability, salary and
9 benefits, frequency of use across the state, length of duty
10 and parental notification; and

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee study options
12 for keeping teachers in the classroom during student
13 attendance hours and improving teacher attendance in order to
14 improve student achievement; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be
16 transmitted to the legislative education study committee.

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